

fact that we believe parks ought to be revitalized and talk about the initiatives that I've laid out to do that. And then, of course, I'll be doing a little spadework for the '04 campaign. One of the most important political stories—[laughter].

Have a great day. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Festus Okonkwo, Nigerian commander of ECOMIL forces in Liberia; Hemant Lakhani, arms dealer charged with selling missiles to U.S. agents posing as terrorists; and former President Jiang Zemin of China.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Further Deployment of U.S. Military Forces in Liberia

August 13, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of June 9, 2003, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Liberia. I am providing this additional report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on U.S. military activities in Liberia.

Shortly after my initial report, additional U.S. combat-equipped, military personnel from the U.S. European Command deployed to Monrovia, Liberia, to augment the U.S. Embassy security forces and to aid in the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Liberia if required, raising the total of such personnel to 56.

On August 1, 2003, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1497 was adopted. It authorized member states to establish a Multinational Force in Liberia to support the implementation of the June 17, 2003, ceasefire, including establishing conditions for initial stages of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration activities; establishing security; and securing the environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the introduction of a longer term U.N. stabilization force. Soon thereafter, approximately 4,350 U.S. military personnel on board U.S. warships deployed into the area of operations off the coast of Liberia in preparation

to assist the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) forces in the conduct of initial humanitarian and stability operations in the vicinity of Monrovia, Liberia. On August 11, 2003, these combat-equipped forces entered the territorial waters of Liberia timed to coincide with the resignation and departure of President Taylor, which was the stated prerequisite before deploying U.S. Armed Forces in support of ECOMIL.

It is anticipated that U.S. forces will redeploy when ECOMIL forces have transitioned to the follow-on U.N. stabilization operations.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions in Liberia.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, California

August 14, 2003

Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming out to say hello. It's getting a little quiet on the ranch—[laughter]—so I decided to pay a visit to the “devil dogs.”

I'm honored to be in the presence of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. I'm proud of you, and I want to thank you for your service to our great country. Each of you serves in a crucial time in our Nation's history. And this Nation is grateful for the sacrifice and service you make.

Many of you have recently returned from Iraq, and it seems like you're happy to be home. More than 70,000 men and women